

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended). A ball valve, comprising:
 - a valve body defining an inner cavity and having a fluid inlet and fluid outlet;
 - a control ball element rotatably mounted in the inner cavity, and having a segment defining a ball face;
 - a flexible annular valve seat positioned in the valve body, the seat comprising a base portion, a cantilevered portion having a sealing face disposed toward the ball face, and a connecting portion between the base portion and the cantilevered portion that is lesser in width than are the base portion and the cantilevered portion;
 - a retaining ring removably disposed in the fluid inlet of the valve body, said retaining ring contacting the base portion of the valve seat and securing the valve seat in place;
 - said retaining ring defining an inner diameter that is smaller than an inner diameter defined by the valve seat.
2. (Canceled).
3. (Canceled).
4. (Original). The ball valve of claim 1, wherein the valve seat defines a central longitudinal axis substantially co-axial with a central longitudinal axis of the fluid inlet and fluid outlet, and further wherein the connecting portion has greater flexibility along the longitudinal axis than does the cantilevered portion.

5. (Currently amended). The ball valve of claim 1, further comprising a rigid support ring disposed held between a downstream side of the base portion of the valve seat and the valve body.

6. (Original). The ball valve of claim 1, wherein the cantilevered portion has a substantially constant width moving away from the sealing face.

7. (Original). The ball valve of claim 1, wherein the cantilevered portion has a slightly increasing width moving away from the sealing face.

8. (Original). The ball valve of claim 7, wherein the sealing face is formed at an angle approximately the same as the angle of the ball face at the point where the sealing face contacts the ball face.

9. (Currently amended). A flexible annular seat for a ball valve, said seat comprising:
a base portion adapted to contact a retaining ring removably disposed in a fluid inlet of said valve;

a cantilevered portion with a sealing face configured to be disposed against a control ball element of said a valve; ~~and;~~

a connecting portion between the base portion and the cantilevered portion that is thinner than the base portion and the cantilevered portion; and

wherein an inner diameter defined by the valve seat is larger than an inner diameter defined by the retaining ring.

10. (Original) The seat of claim 9, wherein the connecting portion has a concave front wall and a substantially flat back wall.

11. (Original) The seat of claim 10, wherein the concave front wall comprises a smooth arc.

12. (Original) The seat of claim 9, wherein the cantilevered portion has a substantially constant width moving away from the sealing face.

13. (Original) The seat of claim 9, wherein the cantilevered portion has a slightly increasing width moving away from the sealing face.

14. (Original) The seat of claim 13, wherein the sealing face is formed at an angle that approximates the angle of a ball face at a point where the sealing face contacts the ball face.

15. (Currently Amended) The seat of claim 9, wherein the base portion defines a substantially flat bottom edge adapted to contact the fluid inlet of the valve, a substantially flat front edge adapted to contact the retaining ring, and a substantially flat rear edge adapted to contact a support ring disposed downstream of the seat.

16. (Original) The seat of claim 9, wherein the cantilevered portion comprises a substantially flat top edge.

17. (Original) The seat of claim 9, wherein the seat is formed from PTFE.